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That there was drinking water contamination until the 1980s at the Camp Lejeune Marine base in Onslow County on North Carolina's coast is not in dispute.

But whether that contamination, with industrial solvents, is responsible for high numbers of cancers and other diseases among families who lived at the base over some years is as yet not a proven, scientific fact, and a report through the National Research Council says it's unlikely that more proof will be found.

That said, U.S. Rep. Brad Miller of the 13th District is right to push, again, for requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs to cover the health care of family members who may have been affected. The illnesses are real, and the water is a logical suspect, even absent overwhelming scientific proof.

North Carolina's Sens. Richard Burr and Kay Hagan also support the position. Those families who have experienced multiple illnesses and early deaths have a justifiable expectation, and they won't break the bank if their health care is covered. This is not like some personal injury lawsuit.

Miller, a Democrat, hopes for bipartisan support, believing that those members of Congress who have veterans and their families in their districts will be, as they should be, sympathetic to their problems.

And in fact, Republican Rep. Joe Wilson of South Carolina has signaled his agreement: "The level of toxicity was so outrageous and (on base) of all places, where we should be cognizant of people risking their lives at work."

Miller may have a chance of getting the government to do the right thing, which common decency dictates.